Art in Place and Places for Art / Fall 2018

FWIS 117: Tuesday/Thursday, 10:50-12:05, Anderson Hall (School of Architecture), Room 230
Nonya Grenader, Professor in Practice, Rice School of Architecture

"The creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act."

-Marcel Duchamp

Houston is the home of many influential works of art and architecture from the past century. During this seminar, you will look closely at a curated selection of original works, installations, and buildings to understand the context and ideas behind the emergence of modern and contemporary art and design. These artifacts and edifices are the primary sources, and you will observe, analyze, describe, and review these significant works using both words and images.

A previous art background is not required. Though the visual component in your responses may be original work (on-site photography, sketches, collage), you are welcome to use existing images. We will focus on your ability to select imagery and effectively pair it with your writing to create a synergistic whole.

Learning Objectives

In sequences of reading, observing, and interpreting, students will:

- Enhance methods of viewing original work to observe nuances of color, form, style, material, massing, and context.
- Develop skills for conveying observations to audiences using words (written and spoken) and images in precise and descriptive ways.
- Learn strategies for preparing questions for active participation in class discussions and site visits.
- Apply techniques for planning, editing, and revising responses.
- Learn various approaches for synthesizing ideas in a final paper and presentation comparing or contrasting several works of art or architecture viewed during the semester.
- Understand the critical role of written, oral, and visual communication in the learning process and in academic life.

Topics and site visits include:

- **ART in PLACE:** *Twilight Epiphany Skyspace* and *The Light Within* (James Turrell, 2012 and 1999). Selected works on campus by Michael Heizer, Charles Mary Kubricht, Jim Love, and Jaume Plensa.
- **ART**: Modern to contemporary painting and photography, including *Portrait of Dominique* (Max Ernst, 1940, The Menil Collection) and *Case Study House #22* (Julius Shulman, 1960, MFAH).
- **PLACE**: The evolution of modern to contemporary architecture as viewed through Houston museums, including the Museum of Fine Arts (Mies van der Rohe addition, 1958) and The Menil Collection (Renzo Piano, 1986).
- **PLACE as ART**: The convergence of art, architecture, and place, exemplified by *Project Row Houses*, Third Ward, Houston (influenced by artists John Biggers, Joseph Beuys, and Rick Lowe).
- **Making / Exhibiting / Collaborating**: A visit to Moody Center for the Arts (architect Michael Maltzan).

Class structure and assignments:
Before viewing, each topic will be introduced with an overview followed by short readings and class discussions focusing on historical and cultural implications surrounding the work. After viewing, students will present and submit a concise response to describe and analyze the work. After each of four short word/image assignments, students will receive feedback and may refine their responses. In a final synthesis paper (10 pages including images) and presentation, students will select several items viewed during the semester and explore comparisons and contrasts in these notable works of art and architecture.

General grading components (specific assignments will have additional grading information) and criteria:

30% Contribution to class discussion, reflecting comprehensive attention to assigned readings and engagement with various aspects of field trips and viewings. Students are expected to be in class on time, with appropriate materials for required pin-ups, readings, and site visits.
30% Four short word/image responses.
40% Final synthesis paper and class presentation (10 pages with images).

A Exceptional work, beyond what is expected or required. Attends class regularly and contributes new and relevant ideas to class conversations and presentations that illuminate, inform, and/or challenge assumptions and perspectives. Exhibits a very high level of thought, skill, and creative thinking when preparing papers and presentations.
B Above average work. Attends class regularly and sometimes contributes new and relevant ideas to class conversations and presentations. Exhibits a good level of thought, skill, and creative thinking when preparing papers and presentations.

C Acceptable work—has no more than three unexcused absences and completes assignments, but rarely contributes in ways noted above.

D Unsatisfactory work—attends class sporadically and completes most assignments, but never contributes in ways noted above.

Feedback on your Writing:
After receiving instructor feedback on the three short assignments, you are encouraged to re-submit the revised version for grading. Before your final paper/presentation, you will prepare a 2 page preview (including readings, references for citation) to be discussed at our individual meeting. You are also encouraged to make appointments with peer consultants at the Center for Written, Oral, and Visual Communication in preparation for the final paper/presentation. These consultants do not proofread or edit your work, but they do provide feedback on topics such as organization of your paper or presentation, the coherence of your argument, appropriate sentence structure, and consistent grammatical errors. You can make an appointment at the Center's website: cwovc.rice.edu.

Class Readings and Discussions:
Selected readings will be posted on Canvas in our class folder. Please refer to the class schedule for titles, dates of completion, and requirements for posting a question in the Canvas forum section. After readings are completed, we will have a comprehensive class discussion that will be led by the students (each student should be prepared to engage in commenting on all readings). Students will also develop a more focused reading selection to support their final paper topic.

Honor Code Statement:
One of the purposes of FWIS is to help new students understand the Rice Honor Code and, more explicitly, to teach students the rules of paraphrasing and scholarly attribution and the appropriate uses of different types of evidence. Accordingly, FWIS instructors will take an educational approach to transgressions of these rules and respond to errors in these areas foremost as issues for grading and opportunities to correct errors, rather than as instances of academic dishonesty. At the same time, all FWIS instructors retain the authority to treat instances of repeat or egregious violations as matters for the attention of the Rice Honor Council.

Disability Accommodations:
Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities will need to contact Disability Support Services in Allen Center Room 111; Phone: 713-348-5841; Email: adarice@rice.edu.

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AUGUST

T/21 Introduction: Art in Place / Places for Art
Discussion: The process of field documentation and creating the word/image.

Th/23 Campus walk, including work by Michael Heizer, Charles Mary Kubricht, Jim Love, Jaume Plensa.
Assignment: prepare a word/image response to one of the works viewed on our campus walk (a warm-up exercise to start our conversation—will not receive a grade).

T/28 Pin-up and discussion.

Th/30 **Site visit** and documentation: Museum of Fine Arts campus, including buildings by William Ward Watkin, Mies van der Rohe, Rafael Moneo, and Steven Holl. We will also visit the Turrell Tunnel (*The Light Inside*), selected paintings, and the MFAH photography archive.
Readings: Peter Carter, *Mies van der Rohe at Work*, p.171-2 and Michael Govan, "James Turrell" in *Interview*.

SEPTEMBER

T/04 Lecture: **Places for Art**: Introduction to the MFA Campus.
Assignment 1: Select any of the buildings and prepare an interpretation (word and image) to pin-up in class on Thurs, Sept. 11. Refer to detailed assignment posted on Canvas. Note that paintings, photographs, and Turrell installation assignment will occur at a later date.

Th/06 Lecture: James Turrell in Houston and visit Turrell's *Twilight Epiphany* on campus.

T/11 **Pin-up, discuss, and turn in** (2 copies)**:** any building from our MFAH visit.

Th/13 Lecture: **Art in Place**: Matisse, Ernst, Cartier-Bresson, and Shulman.
Class visit to The Center (Fondren Library) for additional information on writing feedback.
Readings: Renzo Piano, "Working with Light," from *Art and Activism: Projects of John and Dominique deMenil,* p. 218-21. Joseph Rosa, "Selling Architecture" from *A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman*, p.88-95. Jack Flam, "On Modernism and Tradition, 1935" in *Matisse on Art,* p.71-73. Clare Elliott, Exhibit essay, adapted from *Magritte: The Mystery of the Ordinary*, 2013. **Group 1 – submit a question (from one of the readings) to Canvas by Sept. 17.**

T/18 Lecture: Renzo Piano / Museums.

Th/20 Discussion -- Return of papers (Assignment 1) and general comments regarding the opportunities for revision.
Expanded, student-led discussion of all Group 1 readings.

T/25 "Owl Days" Walking Tour: A presentation/discussion of selected works on campus led by NG with assistance from FWIS students (earlier student responses/observations will be incorporated in tour).

Th/27 **Site visit** and documentation: The Menil Collection (including paintings by Ernst and Magritte), Rothko Chapel, and neighborhood walk. Prepare a word/image interpretation of previously viewed painting, photograph, or installation (items posted on Canvas for reference).

OCTOBER

T/02 **Pin-up, discuss, and turn in:** Selected painting or photograph word/image interpretation.

Th/04 Lecture: **Place becomes Art** / An introduction to Project Row Houses in Houston's Third Ward, including the influences of Joseph Bueys, John Biggers, and Rick Lowe.
Readings: Robert Farris Thompson, "John Biggers's Shotguns of 1987: An American Classic" in *The Art of John Biggers,* p. 108-11. Vicki Goldberg, "Houston, Re-Building by Creating" in *New York Times.* Caroline Tisdall, "Energy Plan for Western Man," from *Joseph Bueys*, p.207-210. Alvia Wardlaw, "John and Dominique de Menil and the Houston Civil Rights Movement," from *Art and Activism: Projects of John and Dominique deMenil,* p. 103-113.

T/09 Mid-term recess—no class.

Th/11 **Site visit** and documentation: Project Row Houses.

T/16 Lecture: Rice Building Workshop at Project Row Houses.
Return of papers (Assignment 2).
Assignment 3: An interpretation (word and image) of the Menil Campus, Rothko Chapel, or Project Row Houses/Third Ward neighborhood for pin-up/discussion in class on Oct. 23.

Th/18 Final Assignment is introduced: synthesis paper and curating a set of ideas.
Group 2--Submit a question (from one of the Group 2 readings) to Canvas by Oct. 20.

T/23 **Pin-up, discuss, and turn in:** Menil Collection (museum), Rothko Chapel, or Project Row Houses word/image interpretation.

Th/25 **Expanded, student-led discussion of all Group 2 readings.**

T/30 Class discussion: sharing topics, focusing/editing ideas, proper form, citation, MLA guidelines, etc.

NOVEMBER

Th/01 **Turn in your revised word/image papers for final grading.**
Site visit (on Campus) to Moody Center for the Arts.

T/06 Discussion: Presentation strategies and techniques.

Th/08 Individual meetings for final paper/presentation (must bring 2-page pre-write/draft with sources).

T/13 Individual meetings for final paper/presentation (must bring 2-page pre-write/draft with sources).

Th/15 All class discussion/questions re: final paper.

T/ 20 Peer review and NG available for any questions.

Th/22 Thanksgiving—no class.

T/28 Final paper due (all students).
Part 1: Final presentations / half of students (5 minutes, with slide show).
Submit pdf of paper to Canvas and turn in one hard copy.

Th/30 Part 2: Final presentations / half of students (5 minutes, with slide show).